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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
AT THE
WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL LUNCHEON

ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

1:28 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Mersman, Mr. Feinstein, distinguished guests, particularly our guests from the People's Republic, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great privilege and a very high honor to have the opportunity of joining you on this occasion, and I thank all of you for the honorary membership in your organization, and I am deeply grateful also for being a transmittal belt for my long, overdue membership card in the Grand Rapids World Affairs Council. (Laughter)

This morning I had an opportunity to announce a very important proposal for a \$100 billion Government corporation to work through the private enterprise system to develop energy independence for the United States by 1985.

It is spelled out in a detailed bill which I will send to the Congress next week. It is my very deep conviction that the United States must not surrender its destiny to those foreign nations on which we now depend for oil. We must move very decisively to give foreign nations a new look at what Americans can do with their great resources when we set out to do it.

The program I envision would enhance America's future at both home and abroad. It would serve the national interest of the United States and would safeguard American jobs and the American economy. I envision a dramatic crash program to develop coal, nuclear and other sources of energy, such as geothermal power, which I saw last spring on my visit here to this part of California, and including oil shale resources which alone are more vast in their potential than all the oil resources of the Middle East. Without such energy independence authority, which would be a Government corporation, our vast natural energy resources may be developed too little to bolster America's leadership in the world through the rest of the 20th century.

As America completes its first 200 years as a nation we must resolve to solve our energy problem. It is the key to our future.

MORE

Page 11

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Bill Wainwright. I am a member of the World Affairs Council and also a registered Republican in the John Baldwin mode from Martinez, California.

I have a question about the House select committee's investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency and their review having publicly demonstrated mistaken certain intelligence assessments on the likelihood of a break-out of war between the Arabs and Israel in 1967.

I am wondering if you intend to facilitate this committee's further investigation along these lines.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me make several comments, and then I will try to answer the precise question.

In the first instance, you must understand that all of the intelligence agencies -- the CIA and the others -- have responded to the Pike committee's request for classified information.

There has been no reluctance on our part to give to that committee all of the requested intelligence information, and I think they recognize that.

I can assure you of a second point -- that under no circumstances will there be any action by me or people working with me to use the classification process to prevent the exposure of alleged or actual criminal action by any Federal authority.

Secondly, there will be no action by myself or my associates to classify so that we protect errors, mistakes that were made over the last 28 years since the CIA was established by law.

The real problem is not their having this classified information. The problem is how they have to use it for the legislative purpose for which the committee was established.

Since they have all of the information, it is not automatically necessary that they make it public. They can examine it in committee, and they can determine from such an examination all of the information that is needed for the legislative purpose for which the committee was established.

I have no reluctance at all, if we could just put a circle around the United States, and give 214 million Americans all of the material as to sources of intelligence, techniques of intelligence, procedures of intelligence. I would have no reluctance with that, if we could confine it to 214 million Americans. (Laughter)

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Some of this information is so sensitive that a few years ago the Congress passed a law saying that any communications intelligence -- that is a very technical term, but it is very significant -- if divulged by any individual except to Congress -- and it should, and I am not alleging they are violating the law but that kind of intelligence -- its source, its techniques, its procedures was made a serious criminal offense by Congress itself, and it is the judgment of a number of the technically qualified people in the intelligence area that there was an error made in the release of some information out of the stacks of classified information we gave them because it probably had the impact of making available some communications intelligence information.

What we have to do is to sit down, not with one committee of the Congress, not one subcommittee, because there are 300 subcommittees and full committees of the Congress. If every one of them established different rules on how we were going to handle with them this highly classified information,, I think you would probably have 300 different rules of declassification.

So, what we have to do -- and I can assure you, as others -- we have to find a way of getting a uniformity in the handling of classified information by the Congress and the 300 committees and subcommittees and the Executive Branch so that what is essential can be made public and what is so sensitive that it should not, if we can't do that, after 200 years of cooperation between the Executive and the Legislative Branch, something is wrong.

I am an optimist, but it is a very serious matter. I am not going to be a participant in destroying the effectiveness of a good United States intelligence agency because that involves our national security, period.

One more, I guess.

QUESTION: Mr. President, my name is Clark Maser. I am a member of the World Affairs Council and an elderly skier. (Laughter)

What steps should the United States take if the State of Israel is expelled from the United Nations, which has been threatened by the so-called tyranny of the majority? Should we withdraw in that case all financial support to the United Nations or should we withdraw from the United Nations?

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